

FOR RELEASE

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San Diego's Lawrence, Drake's Clayberg Highlight 2018 PFL Major Award Recipients

SAINT LOUIS, Mo. – For a second consecutive year, San Diego junior quarterback Anthony Lawrence has been named the Pioneer Football League's Offensive Player of the Year. In addition, Drake defensive lineman Nathan Clayberg was named the PFL Defensive Player of the Year, the duo leading the league's 2018 Major Award recipients, presented Monday.

Lawrence capped his four-year career with his third consecutive major award, beginning with the 2015 Freshman Offensive Player of the Year and including last season's Offensive Player of the Year award. Drake defensive lineman Nathan Clayberg was named the league's Defensive Player of the Year and San Diego's return specialist Michael Armstead was the PFL's Special Teams Player of the Year.

The league also recognized its top freshman contributors. Dayton quarterback Jack Cook was honored as the league's Freshman Offensive Player of the Year. Butler defensive lineman Mickey Kane and Davidson defensive back Dreylan Hines were co-Freshman Defensive Player of the Year.

Capping the league's major awards this season is Stetson head coach Roger Hughes, who was named the PFL's Coach of the Year.

These honors launch the PFL's annual awards week. The PFL will announce its 26th All-PFL Teams, Tuesday. The league will announce its Scholar-Athlete of the Year, Wednesday, coinciding with the announcement of the 26th Academic All-PFL teams.

Lawrence, a fifth-year senior from La Mesa, California, finished his career as the PFL's career passing yardage leader, compiling 12,306 yards during his four-year career which concluded Saturday. Through the first round of the FCS playoffs, Lawrence led all FCS passers in passing efficiency (171.7) and passing touchdowns (39) while ranking second in passing yardage (4,107 yards). Lawrence finished the season completing 961-of-1465 passes with only seven interceptions against those 39 touchdowns.

Clayberg, a fifth-year senior Pella, Iowa, led the PFL's top-rated defense with 30 total tackles, 9.5 tackles for loss, including 3.5 sacks, six pass breakups and two blocked kicks. Behind his leadership, the Bulldogs defense ranked among the FCS' Top 15 in nearly all defensive categories, ranking No. 7 in rushing defense (95.1 yards per game), No. 7 in red zone defense (67.7 success rate), team passing efficiency defense (100.91 rating) and No. 12 in total defense (298.3 yards per game).

Armstead, a junior from Monterey, California, ended his 2018 campaign ranked fifth among all FCS kick returners with 32.3 yards per kickoff return in 2018. That total was boosted by a 100-yard kickoff return for a touchdown during the season, one of only 13 kickoffs returned for a score in all of the FCS this season. Armstead's 877 combined kick return yards also ranked No. 5 in the subdivision.

Cook, a redshirt freshman from Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania, was thrust into the starting quarterback role after senior Alex Jeske tore his ACL in the first quarter of the season's first game. He led all FCS freshmen in passing efficiency (155.5, 8th overall) and was ranked third among all FCS freshmen in passing yardage (2,421) and passing touchdowns (20, 22nd overall).

Kane, a redshirt freshman from Northfield, Illinois, led all PFL freshmen defenders with 10 tackles for loss and five sacks while playing all 11 games for Butler. Those stops behind the line of scrimmage were the bulk of his 21-tackle performance in 2018, his 10 tackles for loss were all solo stops. Kane ranked third among all PFL tacklers with 0.45 sacks per game.

Hines, a freshman from Arlington, Texas, led all PFL freshmen with eight passes defended and four interceptions in 2018. He finished 2018 ranked No. 24 among all FCS players in interceptions per game (0.24). In addition, Hines was fourth among all tacklers with 39 stops (3.5 per game) from his safety position.

Hughes, the seventh year head coach of Stetson, earns his first PFL Coach of the Year citation after leading the Hatters to their best record since the program's restart. Stetson's second-place finish in the 2018 PFL race was their best since joining the league seven seasons ago. The Hatters posted a 6½-game improvement from 2017 (2-9 record) to 2018 (8-2 record) that is the second best among all FCS programs.

San Diego won the 2018 PFL title outright with its third consecutive unblemished 8-0 mark. It was the Toreros 10th PFL crown, all coming since the 2005 campaign (14-season span).

2018 Pioneer Football League Major Award Winners

Offensive Player of the Year: Anthony Lawrence, San Diego

Defensive Player of the Year: Nathan Clayberg, Drake

Special Teams Player of the Year: Michael Armstead, San Diego

Freshman Offensive Player of the Year: Jack Cook, Dayton

Co-Freshman Defensive Player of the Year: Mickey Kane, Butler

Co-Freshman Defensive Player of the Year: Dreylan Hines, Davidson

Coach of the Year: Roger Hughes, Stetson

Scholar-Athlete of the Year: To be announced, Wednesday